

Reunite Readjust & Rediscover



Resources
Resources

Marine Corps Family Team Building, Camp Pendleton

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Introduction

While we pay a great deal of attention to pre-deployment preparation, returning from deployment can be just as stressful – sometimes more so. During the deployment you have changes, as have your family, friends, and spouse. You have taken on new responsibilities and developed confidence in the absence of your spouse. Now the reunion is quickly approaching and you’ve no doubt been anticipating having your Marine/Sailor back home. Being separated from loved ones is always difficult, whether it is two days or six months! Regardless of the length and circumstances causing the separation, the service member and the family will go through a period of adjustment upon return.

Go slow. Like deployment, reunion is a process not an event. You and your family went through a preparation process over several weeks. This involved attending pre-deployment meetings, receiving immunizations, reviewing checklists, packing bags, and so on. Just as deployment was a process that required time and effort, the process of reunion will also require time and effort.

Although you’ll be excited about reunion and the whole family will probably be thrilled with the return of the deployed person, everyone may experience a range of thoughts and feelings. Perhaps the deployed person will be a bit worried about how well he or she will fit back in. At the same time, family members might be concerned about how the deployed person will treat them. They may wonder if their accomplishments will be appreciated or resented. They may be concerned that the deployed person will violate the “go slow” principle and attempt to immediately “take over” everything. These concerns are a normal part of the reunion process and typically require little more than some time and patience to sort out. Remember such changes may challenge you to respond to each other differently. The keys to success are to be reasonable, flexible, and patient.

There is quite a bit of information in this book. Take from it the material that is important to you and file the rest away in case you need further information at a later time. Remember that each deployment can be a building block or a stumbling block... it is up to the partners involved.

Reunion is a special time for everyone! The periods in which you Reunite, Readjust, and Rediscover can be incredible. Have a happy reunion! Enjoy!

If you are interested in online information, please go to:

www.usmc.mil

Click on the following links:

- Family
- Marine Corps Family Team Building
- Return and Reunion Information

Combat Stress

There isn't only one recipe to helping people who are struggling with Combat Stress. Perhaps the most important variable is "being there" for the person. Encourage expression of thoughts and feelings without insistence. Recognize that although other relatives and friends intend to be supportive, they may be inclined to discourage the expression of feelings – particularly anger and guilt. Avoidance of such expression may prolong the grieving process and can be counterproductive. Allow periods of silence and be careful not to lecture.

When talking with grieving individuals, avoid clichés such as "Be strong," and "You're doing so well." Again, allow the individual to tell you how they feel. Finally, do not be afraid to touch. A squeeze of the hand, a gentle pat on the back or a warm embrace can show you are there and that you truly care.

Common Reactions to Combat Stress

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Mental</u>	<u>Behavioral</u>
Tremors	Anxiety	Slowed thinking	Anger
Profuse sweating	Fear	Confusion	Irritability
Chills	Guilt	Disorientation	Isolation
Diarrhea/Constipation	Depression	Difficulty with names	Tears
Dizziness	Unappreciated	Trouble concentrating	Withdrawal
Nausea	Increased worry	Poor attention span	Poor Hygiene
Headaches	Feeling abandoned	Flashbacks	Eating/Sleep Changes

Responses Will Include:

- Scanning the Area
- On Guard
- Emotional Detachment
- Stand-offish
- Wants to stay home/go out
- Driving – Drinking – Bathing - Scratching
- Jet Lag
- Culture Shock



What can you do?

- ◇ Take things slowly
- ◇ Keep up communication
- ◇ Do relaxing things together
- ◇ Don't neglect responsibilities
- ◇ Honor reasonable requests
- ◇ Problems before deployment will still exist

If you or your spouse have experienced the loss of life of a friend or comrade during the deployment, approaches to grieving should be honored. There's no one "right" way to grieve.

Different Genders:



Masculine
Big Picture
Thinks
Logical
Copes Internally
Sighs

Feminine
Details
Feels
Intuitive
Copes Externally
Cries



Different Age Groups:

Children...

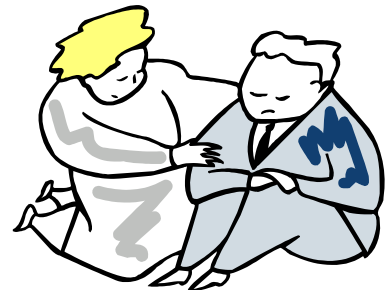
Will act out through behavior
Need to be told the truth in simple terms
Fear abandonment

Adolescents...

Will act out through anger or humor
Need peer support
Fear vulnerability

Elderly...

Will be stunned and somewhat resigned about the loss
Need respect and understanding
Fear helplessness



If you are responding to a friend:

Communication

- Observe reactions including body language
- Notice speech patterns
- Don't assume – ASK
- Match their demeanor and response
- Respect differences

Questions To Ask Yourself

- What are the cultural/religious traditions?
- Who is the head of the family?
- What clothing is appropriate?
- How do they prefer to be addressed?
- How to offer help without offending?

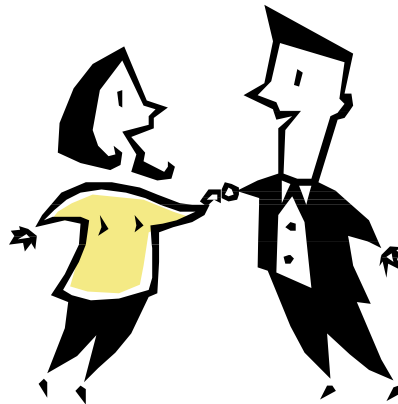
Anticipation

Right now a lot of you may be wondering what it will be like when your husband comes home. You may be engaging in a lot of fantasy about homecoming. There are two things you should know. First, things probably will not be exactly the same as when he left. Second, his expectations about homecoming may be different than yours!

Both you and your spouse are probably thinking a lot about what it will be like to get home. Maybe you're finding it more difficult to concentrate on work as your thoughts continue to drift to reunion. While you're excited about reunion, perhaps you're also a bit worried about some "unfinished business" in your relationship. After all, whatever challenges existed in your relationship before the deployment will not have magically resolved during the deployment. Maybe there are other lingering doubts or fears. Over all, though, you're probably very excited about once again spending time together as a family and sharing private time with your spouse.

Expectations: With this type of thinking, you have a list of inflexible rules about how you and other people should act. When you find other people's actions are not to your liking, you tell yourself they "shouldn't" do that, or they "should have" done something they failed to do. This thinking style creates anger because it implies that we are entitled to get what we want in a specific situation, or that people should be the way we want them to be. Consequently, when our expectations are violated, we perceive that an injustice has taken place, causing us to feel anger.

If you are the "stay behind" spouse, you have probably grown during the deployment. You have taken on new responsibilities and developed confidence that you can make it in the absence of your spouse. Out of necessity, you have learned to cope without your spouse. Now that your partner is coming home, you may be engaged in such activities as dieting, exercising, trying a new hairstyle, buying groceries to prepare your spouse's favorite meal, redecorating the house, and preparing the children, if any, for your spouse to return. At the same time, you are probably looking forward once again to the familiar pattern of sharing family and household responsibilities with your spouse.



Homecoming Considerations

1. Every deployed person and their family members will experience a feeling of anticipation as the end of the deployment approaches. This may take the form of eagerness for reunion and/or a dread of a return to a problem situation.
2. Due to anticipation, few get much sleep the night before homecoming.
3. Take things slowly. Your Marine has been doing things differently for the last few months. It may take awhile for him to adjust to the local time zone, home cooking, lack of continual noise, etc. Some difficulty sleeping is typical.
4. After the end of a deployment, it is not unusual to experience a homecoming let down. Reality is seldom equal to how we have fantasized life after reunion would be. It makes sense to keep expectations reasonable and to be flexible.
5. The Marine may want to stay at home and rest while the spouse may be eager to go out socializing as a couple or get the accumulated “honey do” tasks done. Skillful compromise and reasonable give and take will be needed if arguments and hurt feelings are to be avoided.
6. Keep expectations reasonable and stay flexible. Special welcome efforts of the family and friends, or gifts the deployed members may bring home, may not result in the expected reaction.
7. Children may need time to get reacquainted. Very young children may not remember the deployed person and may be shy. Older children may be resentful of the time the deployed person was away from the family. Children in the home may act out more than usual. Children’s reactions at homecoming may not be what the parents expected or hoped for.
8. If there were unresolved marital or family issues before the deployment, the issues are likely to resurface. Realize it will take time and effort to resolve them. Be patient and keep expectations reasonable.
9. If promises were made through letters or phone calls during the deployment, the person to whom the promises were made will probably remember and expect the promises to be kept.
10. The deployed person may feel surprised or threatened that the partner did so well on his or her own during the deployment. He may feel a little jealous at how closely the children bonded with the parent at home. Such feelings are normal, but it is wiser to show the other person love and appreciation for all their efforts.
11. The returning Marine has probably not driven a vehicle in U.S. traffic for some time, and may need to allow degraded skills to refresh slowly.



A Reminder for Parents:

Children:

- ◇ Children may be torn by loyalties to the at-home parent and desire to please returning parent
- ◇ Children cope differently than adults and at different developmental stages.
- ◇ Be available to your child with time and emotional support.
- ◇ Focus on successes and limit criticism
- ◇ Returning parent – slowly resume previous roles
- ◇ Children's reactions at homecoming may not be what you expected or hoped for. Very young children may not remember their parent and even older children need time to get reacquainted.
- ◇ Be patient. Both parents should let children know they are loved.
- ◇ The returning parent eventually needs time alone with the children.



The homecoming of the Marine/Sailor is a major change for the children in the household. They have grown physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually during the deployment. Children are not as skilled at coping with their stress because they have little life experience. As a result, they may become firmly attached to the returning parent wanting their undivided attention or they may seem distant, withdrawn or seem that they just don't care. There will be a readjustment period, typically four to six weeks, for the entire family.

You can greatly enhance your family's reunion by developing realistic expectations of how your child will respond to the Marines return based upon the child's age. Children are developing individuals who change rapidly in their thoughts and behavior. Expect this reunion and transition to have age appropriate challenges.

1. Children may need time to get reacquainted. Very young children may not remember the deployed person and may be shy. Older children may be resentful of the time the deployed person was away from the family. Children in the home may act out more than usual. Children's reactions at homecoming may not be what the parents expected or hoped for.



2. If there were unresolved family issues before the deployment, the issues are likely to resurface. Realize it will take time and effort to resolve them. Be patient and keep expectations reasonable.
3. If promises were made through letters or phone calls during the deployment, the person to whom the promises were made will probably remember and expect the promises to be kept. This is particularly true for children.

Ideas For Welcome Home Activities

1. Write the story of how you met. Get it printed and bound.
2. Sketch your dream-house floor plan and talk about the possibilities for each room.
3. List your spouse's best qualities in alphabetical order.
4. Tour a museum or an art gallery.
5. Notice the little changes your spouse makes in his/her appearance.
6. Float on a raft together.
7. Take a stroll around the block – and hold hands as you walk.
8. Stock the cupboards with food your spouse loves to eat. (But only if he or she *isn't* on a diet.)
9. Give your spouse a back rub.
10. Rent a classic love-story video and watch it while cuddling.
11. Build a fire in the fireplace, turn out the lights and talk.
12. Take a horse-drawn carriage ride.
13. Go swimming in the middle of the night.
14. Write a poem for your spouse.
15. Remember to look into your spouse's eyes as he/she tells you about the day.
16. Tell your spouse. "I'm glad I married you!"
17. Hug your spouse from behind and give him/her a kiss on the back of the neck.
18. Stop in the middle of your busy day and talk to your spouse for 15 minutes.
19. Create your own special holiday.
20. Do something your spouse loves to do, even though it doesn't interest you personally.
21. Send your spouse a love letter.
22. Build a snowman together.
23. Watch the sunset together.
24. Sit on the same side of a restaurant booth.
25. Picnic by a pond.
26. Give your mate a foot massage.
27. Put together a puzzle on a rainy evening.
28. Take a moonlight canoe ride.
29. Tell your spouse, "I'd rather be here with you than any place in the world."
30. Whisper something romantic to your spouse in a crowded room.
31. Have a candlelight picnic in the backyard.
32. Perfume the bed sheets.
33. Serve breakfast in bed.
34. Reminisce through old photo albums.
35. Go away for the weekend.
36. Share a milk shake with two straws.
37. Kiss the rain.
38. Brush his/her hair.
39. Ride the merry-go-round together.
40. Dedicate a song to him/her over the radio.
41. Wink and smile at your spouse from across the room
42. Have a hot bubble bath ready for him/
43. Hot bubble bath ready for him/her at the end of a long day.
44. Buy Have a new satin sheets.
45. Tenderly touch your spouse as you pass one another around the house.
46. Plant a tree together in honor of your marriage
47. Kite flying.
48. Attend a sporting event you've never been to together.
49. Take time to think about him/her during the day, and then share those thoughts.
50. Drop everything and do something for the one you love right now!



Stress

Reunion stress should not be underestimated. While families experience relief and joy with reunion, both Marines/Sailors and their families must come to terms with the events of the war and with their own stressful experiences and feelings during the time of separation.

Stress Quiz

<u>How often do you...</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Daily</u>
Become irritable with your family or coworkers over small things?					
Have no appetite or eat when you're not hungry?					
Have a drink to help you relax?					
Have trouble falling asleep or wake up earlier than you'd like?					
Have trouble concentrating or making decisions?					
Find that you're not looking forward to being physically intimate again?					
Feel like your stomach is tied in knots?					
Suffer from headaches with no underlying medical condition?					
Have unexplained neck, shoulder, or lower back pain?					
Find yourself just sitting around because you don't have the energy for anything else?					
Forget appointments, dates, or other events?					
Overuse an over-the-counter drug or prescribed medication?					
Feel tired even though you are rested?					
Experience heart palpitations or shortness of breath?					
Find it difficult to join in when others are having fun?					
TOTAL FROM EACH COLUMN					

How to help yourself through stressful times:

- ◇ Recognize YOUR needs
- ◇ Delegate as much as you need to (add your thoughts below)

- ◇ Physical exercise can help relieve stress
- ◇ Accept support from loved ones, friends, and neighbors
- ◇ Don't make any big life changes immediately. During periods of extreme stress, we all tend to make misjudgments.
- ◇ Eat well-balanced, regular meals and get rest
- ◇ Maintain as normal a schedule as possible
- ◇ Do things that feel good to you
- ◇ Be kind to yourself
- ◇ Give/get a hug
- ◇ Do one thing at a time
- ◇ Rent a funny video
- ◇ Know your limits – avoid heroism
- ◇ Eat small amounts of nutritious foods



How to help children through stressful times:

Elementary:

- ◇ Engage in play activities
- ◇ Paint or draw pictures reflecting feelings and thoughts about how to make things better
- ◇ Write in a journal
- ◇ Read and discuss stories about children in conflict and children as problem solvers
- ◇ Write cards or letters to the deployed family member
- ◇ Make a memory book or calendar reflecting positive thoughts and actions
- ◇ Take part in individual and group counseling when problems arise

Middle School or High School:

- ◇ Keep a journal
- ◇ Engage in art activities
- ◇ Write poetry
- ◇ Write stories
- ◇ Write cards or letters to the deployed family member
- ◇ Relax by doing deep breathing and muscles relaxation exercises
- ◇ Learn problem-solving strategies
- ◇ Participate in small group discussions
- ◇ Participate in support groups
- ◇ Exercise
- ◇ Listen to music
- ◇ Take part in individual and group counseling when problems arise

Emotions

Feelings exist -- they are not good or bad, therefore, ways of coping can and will vary with each person. The following has been taken from the Pre-Deployment Information Packet. You are probably in Stage Five as we prepare to Reunite, Readjust, and Rediscover.

- ☐ STAGE ONE -- ANTICIPATION OF LOSS
- ☐ STAGE TWO -- DETACHMENT AND WITHDRAWAL
- ☐ STAGE THREE -- EMOTIONAL DISORGANIZATION
- ☐ STAGE FOUR -- RECOVERY AND STABILIZATION

STAGE FIVE -- ANTICIPATION OF HOMECOMING - About 4 to 6 weeks, prior to spouse coming home -- people begin to feel a sense of anticipation "He's coming home and I'm not ready"!

- 1) Compile a long list of things still left to do and begin to pick up the pace to get things done.
- 2) Experience feelings of joy, excitement in anticipation of the spouse's return and being together again.
- 3) Experience feelings of fear and apprehension. "Does he still love me?" "Will he have changed?" "Will he like what I have done?"
- 4) Clean house of activities acquired to fill the void -- make room for the man again. Some resentment may be felt at having to give up some of the things and having to change again.
- 5) Experience process of evaluating- "I want him back but what am I going to give up?"
- 6) Feel tense, nervous and apprehensive -- burying fears/concerns in busy work and activities.
- 7) Experience a sense of restlessness again but it is generally productive. Some spouses may feel confused due to the conflicting emotions they are having.
- 8) Put off important decisions until the husband's home again.
- 9) Experience changes in eating and sleeping patterns developed while the spouse was gone.
- 10) Children also go through a range of emotions and react to the temperament of the parent.



STAGE SIX – RETURN ADJUSTMENT AND RENEGOTIATION - The return to home and family stage. The husband and wife are back together physically but are not emotionally adjusted to being together. They still may feel distance and have trouble sharing decisions or talking to each other. Be patient, this stage will take time to complete.

The husband and wife:

- 1) Need to refocus on the marriage -- share experiences, feelings and needs and avoid forcing issues on each other.
- 2) Must stop being "solo" married spouse and start being a couple again.
- 3) May feel a loss of freedom and independence -- feel disorganized and out of control as "deployment" routines are disrupted.
- 4) Need to renegotiate roles and responsibilities. Husbands often feel isolated, unwanted, unneeded and left out during this phase, which can cause arguments and hurt feelings for both partners.
- 5) Need to be aware that too much togetherness can cause friction due to having been apart so many week/months.
- 6) Need to begin to share the making of decisions that should be "their" decisions.
- 7) Need to increase their time to talk together and with the children. They may want to plan special activities of short duration as a couple and as a family.
- 8) Will need to progress slowly with such ardently desired sexual relations, which may fall short of expectations. This can be frightening and produce intense emotions. Wives may feel like husband is a stranger and be hesitant at first about intimate relations.
- 9) Need to allow sufficient time to court each other before true intimacy can occur.
- 10) May find questioning threatening and see their partner as being judgmental not just curious.
- 11) May miss the friends that helped them through the separation or who served with them during the deployment.



STAGE SEVEN -- REINTEGRATION AND STABILIZATION - Sometimes within 4 to 6 weeks after the homecoming, wives have stopped referring to "my" car, house, kids, and returns to using "we" or "our" and husbands feel more at home, needed, accepted, and valued.

- 1) New routines have been established and adjusted to by the family.
- 2) Both partners are feeling more secure, relaxed and comfortable with each other.
- 3) The couple and family are back on track emotionally and can enjoy warmth and closeness with each other and their children.

Communication

Communication enhancers:

- ◇ Communication will help to bring you closer together. It gives you time to become reacquainted, and helps to let your partner know how you feel.
- ◇ Understand that feelings of anxiety are a very normal part of the reunion process.
- ◇ You have been apart from each other and you both have grown. Take time to get to know each other again.
- ◇ Discuss your negative feelings and frustrations. Listen carefully to what your partner is trying to communicate to you.
- ◇ Don't assume the worst about your partner. If you have concerns about fidelity, talk to your chaplain, or find a counselor that can help you to work through these feelings.
- ◇ Along with communicating, allow yourself time to readjust to being together again. Go slowly, and enjoy your reunion.

<u>Useful Communication</u>	<u>Useless Communication</u>
SUPPORTIVE	FURIOUS
MOTIVATED	RESTLESS
INTERESTED	OFFENSIVE
LOVING	WORN - OUT
ENTHUSIASTIC	NEGATIVE
SECURE	SARCASTIC

By improving our communication skills, we can improve the quality of our relationships with others. Keys to effective communication include:

- ◇ Stop talking and try not to interrupt
- ◇ Get rid of distractions
- ◇ Make eye contact with the other person
- ◇ Concentrate on the message they are sending you



We are each unique! We communicate differently based on how we view the world. In each box there are communication styles. Which best describes you? Which best describes your spouse?

The key indicators for your energy is how you behave in social situations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers large groups of people, with a wide variety of friends • Act first, and then think • Distracted easily, without as much concentration on a single task • Very talkative and outgoing • As a host/hostess, always the center of the party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers small intimate gatherings of close friends • Think first, then act • Focus well, but not as much concentration on the big picture • Good listener and more private • As a host/hostess, always behind the scenes making sure things run smoothly
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What is your attention focused on? Information is all around us, and the way we take it in shows our outlook in life.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual and association-based learning • Imaginative, with broad ideas of a project • Looking towards the future • Enjoys the changes in relationships and tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and facts-oriented learning • Practical, with a view of each step • Eyes on the present • Likes predictable relationships and tasks
--	--

How do you make decisions? Your temperament is based on the way you process information and make decisions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks through the decision • Works better with a list of pros and cons • Critical by nature • More truthful than tactful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide with feelings • Thinks through a decision based on how it effects people • People pleaser • More tactful than truthful
--	--

What environment do you feel most comfortable in?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes dependable situations • Plans everything, with a to do list in hand • Enjoys completing projects • Feels stressed by lack of planning and abrupt changes • More likely to complete a goal • “All play and no work doesn’t finish the project” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes flexible situations • Waits until multiple ideas come up, and picks what to do on the fly • Enjoys starting projects • Feels closed in by specific plans and looks forward to changes • More likely to see an opportunity • “All work and no play makes Jane a dull girl:
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Finances

Take a moment to fill in the boxes. Use this to keep your finances on track, spend wisely, and save for your future.

<p><u>Yesterday</u>, I made the following purchases:</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Item:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Cost:</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 100px;"></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Total:</td> </tr> </table>	Item:	Cost:			Total:		<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">What do I <u>need</u>:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">What do I <u>want</u>:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>i.e. gas</td> <td>i.e. Starbucks</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="height: 100px;"></td> </tr> </table>	What do I <u>need</u> :	What do I <u>want</u> :	i.e. gas	i.e. Starbucks		
Item:	Cost:												
Total:													
What do I <u>need</u> :	What do I <u>want</u> :												
i.e. gas	i.e. Starbucks												
<p style="text-align: center;">How can I save money? What will I do with the money I save?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How can I pay off debt more quickly?</p>												

Did you learn anything by doing this? Do you think if you charted your daily spending for 2 weeks that you might recognize some expensive habits?

There will be changes in pay when they return due to:

Imminent Danger Pay: \$ -\$225

A monthly entitlement starting on the day of arrival to Iraq, and stopping on the day of departure from Iraq.

Deployed Per Diem Pay: \$ -\$105

A daily entitlement of \$3.50 per day. Starts the day after arrival and ends the day before departure.

Hardship Duty Pay: \$ -\$100

A daily entitlement of \$3.33 per day. Retroactive after 30th day in Iraq, and stops the day of departure from Iraq.

Family Separation Pay: \$ -\$250

A monthly entitlement. Retroactive after 31st day of deployment. Stops the day before the date of return home.

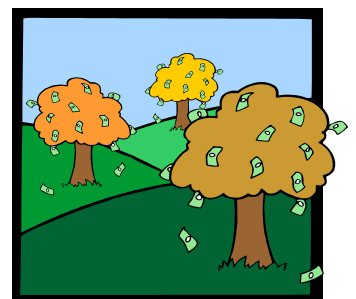
Taxable Income: \$?

A monthly entitlement is applied to all taxable income while in country. Rank and years of service determines amount.

Other: \$?

TOTAL: \$

Paycheck will be less this amount upon return, PLUS be taxable!



Use this worksheet to help with financial goals and budgets:

<u>FINANCES</u>	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<u>INCOME DESCRIPTION</u>												
Wages (take-home) partner 1												
Wages (take-home) partner 2												
Interest and dividends												
Miscellaneous Income												
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>												
<u>EXPENSE DESCRIPTION</u>												
Auto expense												
Auto insurance												
Auto payment												
Beauty shop and barber												
Cable TV												
Charity												
Child care												
Clothing												
Credit card payments												
Dues and subscriptions												
Electricity												
Entertainment and recreation												
Gas company												
Groceries and outside meals												
Home repairs												
Household												
Income tax (additional)												
Laundry and dry cleaning												
Life insurance												
Medical and dental												
Mortgage or rent payment												
School expenses												
Telephone bill												
Tuition												
Vacations												
Water												
Other												
Other												
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>												
<u>CASH (SHORT) EXTRA</u>												

Cover Your Bases: Managing Your Money In The Military

By the Financial Planning Association

Managing your money on a military budget is tough enough. Now with so many service men and women being summoned to duty away from home, added complexities and costs can arise. Many military families nationwide are seeking advice about what they need to do differently with their money.



Financial planners say that, if you're already working with a budget, saving, and setting goals and objectives, you shouldn't really deviate from those long-term goals, even in uncertain times. Planners advise military families to consider the following tips:

1. Set goals. If you haven't already, set aside time to think about what you want out of life. Set short-term, intermediate and long-term goals for your life. Then plan your financing accordingly. You wouldn't go into combat without a plan, and you shouldn't spend your money without one either.

2. Live by a budget. Know what's coming in and what's going out.

3. Pay yourself first. Save a portion of your earnings every month. When you receive bonus pay or tax-free pay, save more than you spend.

Military personnel who serve in a combat zone can exclude certain pay from their income for purposes of paying income taxes. This includes active duty pay earned in any month served in a combat zone, including:

- Imminent danger/hostile fire pay
- Re-enlistment bonuses if the voluntary extension or re-enlistment occurs in a month you served in a combat zone.
- Pay received for duties as a member of the Armed Forces in clubs, messes, post and station theaters, and other non-appropriated fund activities in a month you served in a combat zone.
- Awards for suggestions, inventions, or scientific achievements during a month you served in a combat zone.

4. Establish an emergency fund. Most financial planners suggest an emergency fund equaling approximately three to six months of living expenses. If it sounds like a lot, realize it is. Having it will help ensure your financial security if your income should change dramatically.

5. Keep debt down. While your spouse is away, don't comfort yourself with a new wardrobe or unnecessary expenditures that cause you to go into debt. Keep credit card spending to a minimum. Take advantage of loans that make sense. Investigate opportunities available through the Veterans Administration (www.va.gov <<http://www.va.gov>>). If possible, always pay cash.

6. Take advantage of deadline extensions for things like federal income taxes. These extensions are available to military personnel serving in a combat zone or supporting a combat operation. The IRS also offers more flexible deductions for moving expenses associated with military moves. Extensions provide additional time for filing and payment to occur. Look at it as one less thing to worry about.

7. Retirement. Although military careers can end with military pensions and veteran's benefits, planners advise clients to begin saving their own money for retirement at an early age. Bonuses and other tax-free income can go a long way toward ensuring a comfortable and well-deserved retirement.

8. Insurance, Insurance, Insurance. Take advantage of military discounts after you've researched the right insurance to meet your needs. Term policies will generally provide military families with the most coverage for the smallest premium, but they have no savings feature.

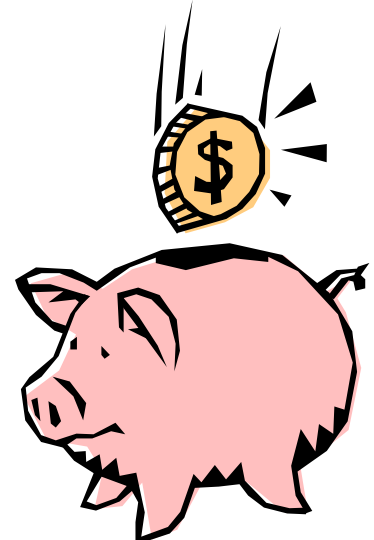
9. Get organized. Keep your important documents in a safe place and be sure to tell someone where to find the key. Update your will. Make arrangements for quarterly or semi-annual premiums or bills to be paid to ensure that automobile or homeowner's policies do not lapse while the service member is away.

10. Do your research and spend time on your finances. Since only one in 135 million people wins the lottery, we all have to take responsibility for our own financial success. Stay abreast of benefits available to you. Communicate what you learn with your family and loved ones.

Just remember that advanced planning and sticking to the plan is the key to any successful mission. Putting your financial house in order is always a smart move. When times are uncertain, that stability is one less thing to worry about. It's also one more thing to look forward to when conflicts are resolved and everyone returns home safely.

Getting debt free is huge part of managing your money. As a member of Military.com you can request free, no obligation Credit Counseling at:
<http://www.military.com/LeadForms/DebtConsolidationLead>

This column is provided by the Financial Planning Association (FPA). FPA believes that everyone needs objective advice to make smart financial decisions and, when seeking the advice of a financial planner, the planner should be a CFP professional. For more information on financial planning, visit www.fpanet.org or call FPA toll-free at 800-647-6340. For local financial planning, call Marine and Family Services at (760) 725-6098.



Possible Changes

Experience has shown that virtually all military members returning from deployment, and their household members, experience at least a little uneasiness as they readjust to their normal environment. Changes, some more subtle than others, have taken place during the deployment for the military member, their family, and their friends and colleagues. To successfully cope with change requires that we make corresponding adjustments in attitude, thought, and behavior.

Our perception, or way of seeing things, affects the way we interpret what happens to us, how we make decisions, and how we carry out our daily tasks.

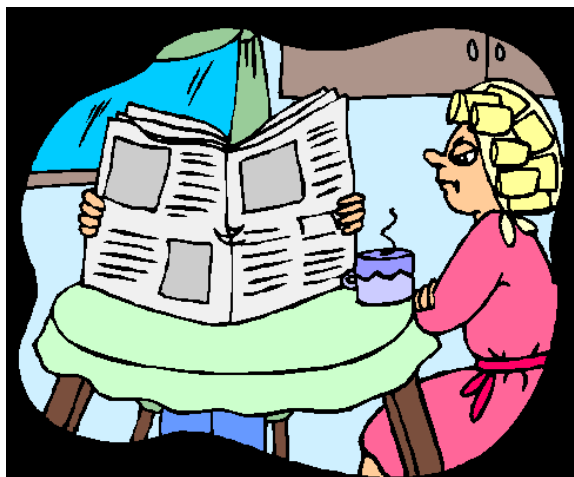
How we perceive things, depends on:

- ◇ Our own personal history
- ◇ Where we grew up
- ◇ What type of people we were around
- ◇ What type of message those people gave us
- ◇ Whether we chose to believe those messages or not

The words we choose, as well as our attitudes,
will help through difficult periods of change.

<u>Reactive Language</u>	<u>Proactive Language</u>
There's nothing I can do	<i>Let's look at our alternatives</i>
That's just the way I am.	<i>I can choose a different approach</i>
He makes me so mad.	<i>I control my own feelings</i>
They won't allow that.	<i>I can create an effective solution</i>
I have to do that.	<i>I will choose an appropriate response</i>
I can't	<i>I choose</i>
I must	<i>I prefer</i>
If only	<i>I will</i>

WIVES SHOULD EXPECT	HUSBANDS SHOULD EXPECT
Expect him to be different.	Expect her to be different.
You may not like your service member's bachelor ways. He may be messy and inattentive to the family schedule	Your wife may be more independent and confident. The fact that she can cope without you doesn't mean that she wants to.
Both of you may want to be romantic and expect gifts.	Your wife may want to be waited on hand and foot. She may believe that she's had the hardest tour at home.
Expect him to have trouble sleeping for a while. He's used to a ship's vibrations, or to the presence of other people in a barracks.	She is accustomed to the bed to herself.
You may be apprehensive about expenses and will want to be recognized or appreciated for handling the financial matters.	He may want to spend freely. He may have become accustomed to spending at the various ports. (Husbands, try not to criticize the way your spouse has handled the finances while you've been away. Instead, let you wife know you've appreciated her efforts).
Be patient with your husband as he gets reacquainted with the children. Remember, Dad wants to be included in the decisions concerning the children.	Gradually move back into your father role. Take it easy on the children, especially where discipline is concerned. Appreciate her efforts while you have been away.
Expect that sex may be awkward between you at first. Talk it over.	Expect that sex may be awkward between you at first. Talk it over.



Overcoming Roadblocks

Ten Keys to a Happy Relationship



- 1) **Pick your fights:** Constant battles over small issues are emotionally taxing and tend to blunt the impact when you really need to make an important point.
- 2) **Be a friend to each other:** Show your partner the same trust and loyalty you give and expect from your best friend.
- 3) **Communicate:** Don't expect your partner to be a mind reader. If something is important to you, don't avoid saying it. If something is still on your mind 24 hours later, you need to talk about it.
- 4) **Be romantic:** Just because you've been married for a while doesn't mean you can't hold hands or plan a special evening together.
- 5) **Have a life outside the marriage:** Find time for at least one outside activity. A little bit of independence can enhance your relationship.
- 6) **Resolve disagreements:** Disagreements that are left unfinished can fester and lead to deep resentment on both sides.
- 7) **Show you care with your actions:** Couples who are truly partners show they care for each other in many small nurturing ways.
- 8) **Share:** Make time to share projects, ideas, concerns, and goals.
- 9) **Take care of yourself:** Casual is fine, sloppy is not. Take pride in your appearance and your health.
- 10) **Hang in there:** All couple go through rough times, emotionally and financially, but for some there crises can make the relationship stronger. Keep in mind what brought you together in the first place.

Romance/Intimacy

Intimacy and sex are not the same thing. Hopefully you and your partner have maintained a solid sense of intimacy, or an “emotional connection,” during the deployment through frequent communication. What you have not been able to maintain, as you and your partner are no doubt aware, is the sexual component of your relationship. Since sex tends to be prominent in the thinking of both spouses during deployment, it tends to become a key focus of reunion. Given sexuality is a highly personal aspect of your personal and marital lives, you need to deal with this area with patience.

Although sexual intimacy can resume instantly, and this may well be your mutual desire, the level of overall emotional intimacy and comfort with one another that you experienced before the deployment may take awhile to regain. Keep in mind that for over several months you’ve only been able to communicate with each other, at best, a few minutes a week, and that you’ve had no face-to-face contact. Again, go slow.

Considering you’ve both experienced personal growth while separated, it makes sense to take some time to get to know each other again, not unlike two friends who haven’t seen each other for a while. Build upon the intimacy you shared. Recognize you and your partner are “out of practice.” As a result, it’s not highly unusual after lengthy separations for temporary awkwardness to arise. Also, you may feel a bit uncomfortable together initially. If you have such experiences, do not make too much of them, as doing so only heightens anxiety, which in turn can set you up for a negative cycle of sexual problems. Simply relax, take your time, and let your sexual relationship resume in a way that is gratifying for both of you.



Romance & Intimacy Barriers to Intimate Communication

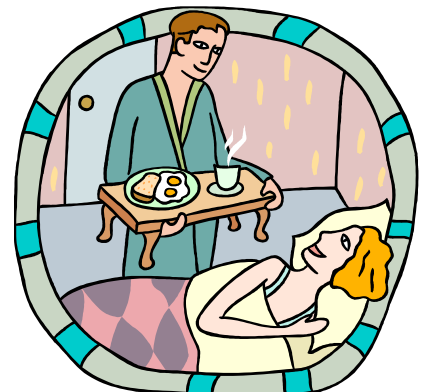
Unrealistic fantasies and expectations	Feelings of anger and stress about the separation
Feeling anxiety about intimacy and sexual relations	Feeling that sexual relations need to be rushed to make up for lost time
Feeling that your partner is a stranger	Concern about faithfulness to your relationship

Emotional Intimacy – no hidden secrets

- ◇ Open sharing of attitudes, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.
- ◇ Trusting yourself and your partner. Accepting of your and your husband’s strengths and weakness. The ability to maintain emotional connection through difficult or painful times.
- ◇ Don’t assume that you and your husband have the same needs and desires.

Sexual Intimacy – emerges during sexual activity

- ◇ Giving and receiving pleasure-oriented touching and communication. It involves sharing intimate and sexual pleasure.
- ◇ It involves sharing more than intercourse and orgasm!



For the Spouse (YOU!)

Congratulations! You have:

- ❖ *Shown strength!*
- ❖ *Held the family together!*
- ❖ *Displayed pride and patriotism!*
- ❖ *Allowed your Marine/Sailor to focus on the mission!*
- ❖ *Accomplished much!*

Feel proud of yourself!



Keep in mind that your spouse has been operating in a regimented environment with a daily routine. Transition to family life takes awhile. In some instances, your spouse might be rebellious against any kind of schedule or preplanned activity you have set up. Be patient. There might also be some trouble sleeping soundly throughout the night at first. It takes some time to make the transition from barracks-style living to home living, especially if your spouse has been standing rotating shifts or working irregular hours.

Do not take it personally if you find your spouse day dreaming about work-related issues. Your spouse has been immersed in a totally work-related environment while away from home. It takes a while to let go of that world, even when a spouse is relieved to be away from it and home with the family.

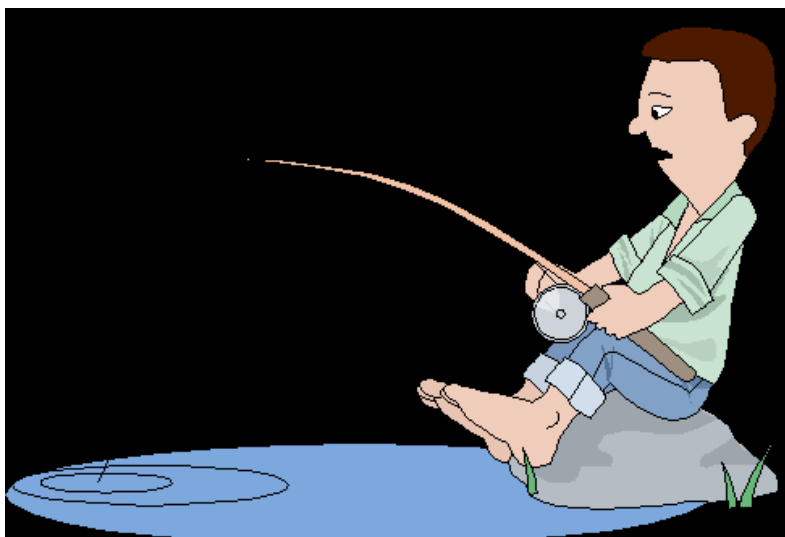
You might find that your spouse is either surprised or even hurt that you have been able to manage everything so well alone. Try not to get defensive. Everyone wants to feel needed. Reassure your partner that although you are capable of handling the household and family on your own, you need companionship and emotional support. Point out that it also makes life a lot easier when you have someone with whom you can share these responsibilities.

- ◇ Do something special to welcome your spouse home... make his favorite dessert. Be understanding and flexible if your spouse is too tired to notice.
- ◇ Give your spouse time to adjust to being home. Don't tightly schedule activities for them. Don't expect them to take on all their old chores right away.
- ◇ Plan on some family togetherness time. Suggest a picnic or special family meal.
- ◇ Be patient and tolerant with your spouse. He or she may not do things exactly as before. New experiences during deployment may bring changes to attitude and outlook. There may be initial discomfort in adjusting.
- ◇ Don't be surprised if your spouse is a little hurt by how well you were able to run the household and manage without them. Let them know that your preference is to share those responsibilities again.
- ◇ Stay involved in your own activities and interests, but be flexible about making time for your spouse.

For the Returning Marine/Sailor

Remember to communicate with your spouse. Share this workbook together and talk about important points that came up in the workshop. Communicate with your spouse and let him/her know what you expect and need. Below are some topics that you may consider addressing with your spouse:

- ◇ Spending some time with the entire family doing family things.
- ◇ Ask your spouse to show interest and pleasure in how family members have grown and mastered new skills.
- ◇ Expect it will take a little time to become reacquainted with your spouse. Be sure to tell them just how much you care about them. Make an effort to do romantic things.
- ◇ Resist the temptation to criticize. Remember that your spouse has been doing her or his best to run the household single-handedly. Give them credit for their efforts.
- ◇ Take time to understand how your family may have changed during the separation.
- ◇ Don't be surprised if some family members are a bit resentful of the deployment. Others may view the deployment as more fun and exciting than staying at home.
- ◇ Infants and small children may be shy or even fearful around you at first. Be patient.
- ◇ Resist the temptation to go on a spending spree to celebrate your return. The extra money saved may be needed later for unexpected expenses.
- ◇ Most importantly, make time to talk with your loved ones. Your spouse and each child need individual time and attention from you. Focus on the positives!



For the Single Marine/Sailor Outside the Family

A single person may be returning to someone living in his or her house or apartment. They may have had someone watch over the home and their personal belongings. Alternatively, they may be moving into the barracks with a new roommate. It is also possible that the first task upon returning home is to find a place to live and put personal belongings in order. Once the dust settles, it will be time to reestablish family ties and social connections.

The single Marine or Sailor has probably changed in many ways since they have last seen you, family, and friends. New friends have probably been made. It is possible the returning service member may have been to several other countries and experienced those languages, religions, and cultures. A significant other in this friend's life may have also changed in the absence. Talk with the returning Marine or Sailor about these changes and what stress it may be causing them.

A return from deployment will have an impact on social relationships. Married friends are now getting reacquainted with their families. This can promote loneliness. Encourage the single Marine/Sailor to reconnect with old friends.

Talk with your friends about new plans for the future. What are the immediate plans and what are the more distant plans? What new activities are of interest? Get reacquainted and enjoy the journey.



For the Reservist called to Active Duty

Your spouse will prepare to go back to work in the Civilian sector at some point. This environment may be different from when they were working there before the deployment. Your spouse may be concerned with how they will fit back into the organization and what decisions have been made in their absence. Shifting from a deployment schedule and activities back to “business as usual” may cause some anxiety as well.

The readjustment from active duty should go smoothly. Remind them to go slow and to talk with colleagues and supervisors to learn of changes that have taken place. It will take time and discussion to understand rationale behind some decisions made. Be supportive of this difficult transition for your spouse, and remind him/her to take things slowly and try to accept decisions that have been made while they were away.

Some colleagues may harbor resentment as they’ve assumed a heavier workload due to the absence of the military person. As unfair as this may seem, it is something to be prepared for. If this becomes the case, it is best to say thank you to those who worked extra hard in during the absence and express appreciation for the work they did. Let them know that (you’re) glad to be back to work and in a familiar routine, and especially to be back with family.

Other things to remind your spouse as he/she returns to work:

- ◇ Say “thank you” for the work done while away
- ◇ Communicate with colleagues about decisions made
- ◇ Go slowly
- ◇ Limit “war stories” shared with co-workers
- ◇ There may be the need to re-establish credibility
- ◇ Ask questions



For the Child/Children

Some children will keep their distances from the returning parent for a while. They may still have unresolved feelings of anger toward that individual for leaving them, and are not ready to allow that parent to be part of their lives yet. They may have to be “courted” for a while until they feel comfortable again.

Other children will become “clingers.” Each time the parent disappears from sight for a few moments, they think the adult has gone away from home again. As a result they tend to hold on for dear life and not let the parent out of their sight. Be patient. This will pass with time as they see you leave and return again.

At reunion time Dad could be meeting his new infant son or daughter for the first time. This can be quite an emotional experience for everyone, including the infant. Parents, do not feel that you have to thrust a crying infant into the arms of the returning members. Do not feel overwhelming rejection if your infant will not come to you at first. Give the child some time. Infants are people too, and they need time to develop trust before they feel comfortable with a new adult in their lives.

Encourage your spouse to spend some time individually with each one of your children by doing some activity that is special to them. This allows the parent to get reacquainted with each child in a way that is most comfortable for that particular child. It also makes each child feel special and appreciated.

The children will have changed, both physically and emotionally. Sometimes the changes are barely noticeable from day to day, but if you go away, you might discover upon your return that your toddler is walking, your fourth grader has learned the multiplication tables, and your teenage daughter has a new boyfriend.

Children of deployed military personnel experience wartime stress that may manifest itself in various ways. Depending upon the age and maturity of the child, children feeling the burdens of severe stress may exhibit behavioral changes that commonly include:

- ◇ “Clinging” behavior or extreme neediness
- ◇ Changes in eating or sleeping patterns, including nightmares
- ◇ Complaints of physical illness or symptoms for which no cause can be found
- ◇ Nervousness, excitability
- ◇ Fears related to the war or related events
- ◇ Withdrawal or extreme sadness
- ◇ Concentration problems
- ◇ A return to “early” behavior patterns (e.g. toilet training)

What you can do to help your child/children:

- ◇ Be available to your child with time and emotional support
- ◇ Focus on successes; limit criticism
- ◇ Returning parent – slowly resume previous roles



Additional help information can be obtained from Chaplains, Counseling Services, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, and New Parent Support Program

For the Parent

Many parents worry about how their children will act when he or she returns home. Parents dream of their babies or preschoolers shouting, “daddy, daddy” or “mommy, mommy” as they run down the pier or across the deck into their arms. This dream may not happen. If you imagine a “perfect” reunion for your child, you may be disappointed.

The homecoming of the Marine is a major change for the children in the household. They have grown physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually during the deployment. Children are not as skilled at coping with their stress because they have little life experience. As a result, they may become firmly attached to the returning parent wanting their undivided attention or they may seem distant, withdrawn or seem that they just don’t care. There will be a readjustment period-- typically four to six weeks--for the entire family.

You can greatly enhance your family's reunion by developing realistic expectations of how your child will respond to the Marine’s return based upon the child's age. What you can generally expect of different age children, and how you can facilitate the reunion process with your children is discussed below. Children are developing individuals who change rapidly in their thoughts and behavior.

Infants (Birth to 1 year): An infant has not yet developed much of an ability to remember people and events. As painful as this might be for you to consider, do not expect an infant to recognize the parent who has returned from a long deployment. Instead, expect him/her to initially react as if the Marine were a stranger. The infant will likely cry when held by the Marine, pull away, fuss, and cling to the person who was his/her primary caregiver during the deployment. Once again, “*go slow.*” The baby will “warm up” to the Marine parent at his/her own pace. The newly returned parent should gently get involved in holding, hugging, bathing, feeding, playing with, and otherwise caring for the baby. The key is to be patient and let your baby’s reactions be your guide in terms of what pace to proceed in getting acquainted.

Toddlers (1 - 3 years): A typical toddler response would be to hide from the newly returned parent, to cling to his/her primary caregiver, cry, and perhaps regress in potty training. Give your child space and time to warm up to the returning parent. It helps for the Marine to sit at eye level with your child and talk with him/her. A gentle offer by the Marine to play with the toddler may be helpful, but do not force the issue. Doing so will only intensify your child’s discomfort and resistance. Also, it may have helped the child to more clearly remember the deployed parent if the stay behind caregiver frequently showed him/her pictures of the military member and said “Daddy” or “Mommy,” as the case may be. This is true because for children at this age, the old adage “out of sight, out of mind” aptly applies.



Preschoolers (3 - 5 years): Children in this age range tend to think as though the world revolves around them. Keeping that in mind, it's not surprising that your preschooler may think he/she somehow made their parent go away, or that the Marine left because he or she no longer cared about the child. If this is the case with your preschooler, he/she may feel guilty or abandoned. Your child may express intense anger as a way of keeping the returning parent at a distance, thereby "protecting" himself/herself from further disappointment. Your preschooler is also likely to do some limit testing (see if familiar rules still apply). To promote the reunion process, parents will accept the child's feelings, not act overly concerned, and focus on rewarding positive behaviors. It is good for the returning parent to talk with the child about his or her areas of interest, be it storybooks, toys, or whatever and give the preschooler some undivided attention. Meanwhile, the Marine should support the other parent's enforcement of family rules but be careful about too quickly stepping into an authoritative role. The child needs time to adjust to the Marine once again being an active participant in his/her life.

School Age (5 - 12 years): Children in this age range are likely to give returning parents a very warm reception if the parent-child relationship was strong before the separation. The school age child may excitedly run to the Marine upon arrival. He/she will try to monopolize the returning parent's attention and want to showoff scrapbooks, hobby items, or school projects when the Marine gets home. If, on the other hand, the returning parent's relationship with the school age child was strained, the child may fear the Marine will punish him/her for all the child's misbehavior during the deployment. Such a thought process may lead the child to at first be shy or withdrawn around the newly returned parent. At any rate, it is best for the Marine to have friendly interest in what the child has done during the time of deployment and praise him/her for his/her efforts and accomplishments.

Adolescent (13 - 18 years): Adolescents can have mood swings that go up and down like a roller coaster. One moment they are solving problems in a reasonable and logical way and the next may be reacting in a purely emotional fashion. So, your adolescent's reaction to your return may be characterized by mixed emotions. Like the school age child, your adolescent will likely be very excited to see the Marine again, if the relationship was good-natured prior to the deployment. Sometimes, however, adolescents are reserved to publicly express their emotions and may be more concerned about acting "cool" in front of their peers. Adolescents tend to be very sensitive about being unfavorably judged or criticized. With this in mind, be sure to make time to discuss with your adolescent what is going on in his/her life as well as what you've experienced. As with sons and daughters of any age, it's critical to give your adolescent some of each parent's undivided pleasant attention.



For the Single Parent

If you're a single parent in the military, you may experience some unique concerns about reuniting with your children. If you're a custodial parent, you need to consider how your children have bonded with their caregiver during your absence. How will that bond impact your relationship with your children as well as with the caregiver? If, on the other hand, someone else has primary custody of your child, you may wonder how your child will respond since you have likely missed "regular" visits with him/her.

If you're a custodial parent, then your children probably have been living with someone else for several months. Accordingly, to the extent this has been a fulfilling relationship, the bond between this caregiver and your children has strengthened. Your children's increased loyalty to their caregiver may be painful for you in that you may initially feel unneeded or even jealous. Again, *go slow*.

Focus on communicating both with the caregiver and your children, and recognize that you and your children will need to adapt to living with each other again. Your children have been living with someone else who probably had different rules and procedures compared to your own household. Give yourself and your children adequate time to "shift gears". The adjustment period, which may take several weeks, can at times be awkward. You can smooth the transition process by first of all actively involving the caregiver with the transition. To force young children to suddenly separate from the caregiver can be emotionally traumatic. Secondly, since your children have lived with different family rules and procedures, take time to compare with them the rules of your home. As you're doing this, seek your children's inputs regarding how they would prefer life at home to be. They need to feel included in the process of reestablishing the structure and "flavor" of your home environment.



If you are a non-custodial parent, your children's living conditions were probably not impacted by your deployment. Your visits with your children have, however, been curtailed. As you reestablish these visits, remember you and your children have grown and you will need to take time to get reacquainted.

Resource Phone Numbers

There are numerous resources for you and your family that can help you adjust after deployment. The following are some of the resources available:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Resource</u>
Chaplains Referral Numbers Base Chaplain..... 1MEF Chaplain..... 1 st MARDIV Chaplain..... 1 st FSSG Chaplain..... RDC Chaplain.....	(760) 725-4700 (760) 725-9032 (760) 725-6692 (760) 725-6377 (760) 725-4700	In case of an emergency after duty hours, call (760) 725-5617/5618.
Children, Youth, and Teens	(760) 725-9723	Can supply lists of certified home daycare providers on base.
Consolidated Substance Abuse Counseling Center	(760) 725-5538	Assistance with Alcohol and Drug Dependence
Counseling Services	(760) 725-9051	Counseling, Support, Domestic Violence, and Post Traumatic Stress
Information & Referral	(760) 725-3400	Research, Resources, and Information both on and off base.
Marine Corps Family Team Building	(760) 763-1337 725-9052	Pre-Deployment, Reunion, KVN, LINKS, CREDO
MCCS One Source	(800) 433-6868	www.mccsonesource.com user id: marnines password: semper fi
Military Outreach Ministries	(877) 895-5942	Assistance for Food/Clothes in times of need.
Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton	(760) 725-1555 725-1556	Mental health counseling
Navy/Marine Corps Relief	(760) 725-5337	Emergency Assistance In case of an emergency after hours, call (800) 951-5600
New Parent Support	(760) 725-3884 725-6335	Working with children during deployment
TRIWEST	(800) TRIWEST (800) 874-9378	Medical benefits for military personnel and their dependants

*Childrens
at home workshop
with parent*



Where Have the Children Been?

Help your children with the following activity:

Circle the feelings that you have had while your parent was deployed:

Smart	Lonely	Independent
Happy	Sad	Brave
Safe	Scared	Helpful
Sick	Angry	Excited to see my parent again

What other feelings did you have? _____

Circle the responsibilities that you have had since your parent was deployed:

Take out trash	Clean my room	Walk my dog
Help with the yard	Help cook	Write letters to my parent
Watch my siblings	Wash car	Water plants
Help with dishes	Pick up toys	Make cookies for my parent

What other responsibilities did you have? _____

What have you done since your parent was deployed?

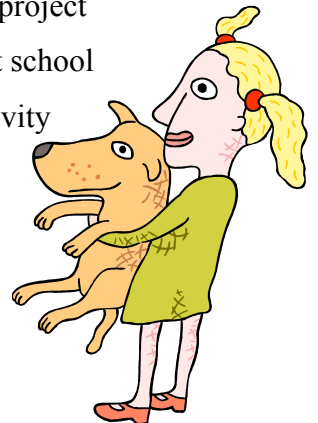
Family Reunion	Sleepovers	Birthday parties
Holidays	Visit friends	Visit family
School activities	Gone to the beach	Gone to an amusement park
Seen movies	Made new friends	Made something for parent

What other things have you done? _____

What accomplishments have you had since your parent was deployed?

Honor roll	School play	School award
Sports award	Made a team	Was picked for a project
Made artwork	Learned something new	Good test score at school
Made good choices	Wrote a story	Started a new activity

What other accomplishments have you had? _____



Anticipation

Discuss your child's dreams about their deployed parent returning home. Talk about their concerns. Ask them what their expectations are for the homecoming and days that follow.

Dreams



Concerns

What are your expectations at homecoming?

What are your expectations of days that follow homecoming?

Ideas for Welcome Home Activities

Start preparing your children for the reunion when you think they are ready. Pre-plan activities. Give your children an opportunity to make gifts and decorations. Try to keep them involved.



The Family

What are some ways you want to welcome home your parent?

What are some things you want to do when your parent comes home?

Emotions

Parents: Young children may need help with this exercise. Help them to write a definition for the following words or describe an incident that made them feel that particular way.

Brave _____

Defeated _____

Eager _____

Envious _____

Glad _____

Hopeless _____

Jealous _____

Overwhelmed _____

Peaceful _____

Shy _____

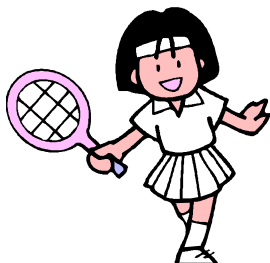
Tired _____

Worried _____



Stress

Stress can cause problems if not dealt with effectively. With your child, look at the pictures and answer the questions that follow.



Sports	Walking with Pet	Music
How would doing this activity help relieve stress?	How would doing this activity help relieve stress?	How would doing this activity help relieve stress?
How often would you do this activity?	How often would you do this activity?	How often would you do this activity?



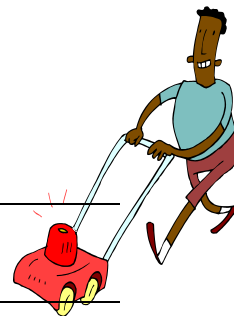
Reading	Dancing	Skateboarding
How would doing this activity help relieve stress?	How would doing this activity help relieve stress?	How would doing this activity help relieve stress?
How often would you do this activity?	How often would you do this activity?	How often would you do this activity?

What are other activities could you do to help relieve stress?

Renegotiation of Responsibilities

What is responsibility?

Are you responsible?



List Your Responsibilities At Home, in School, and in your Community	I <u>want</u> to keep this responsibility	I <u>don't want</u> to keep this responsibility	This is a responsibility I <u>need</u> to keep

Home:

I was responsible when: _____

I was irresponsible when: _____

School:

I was responsible when: _____

I was irresponsible when: _____

Community:

I was responsible when: _____

I was irresponsible when: _____

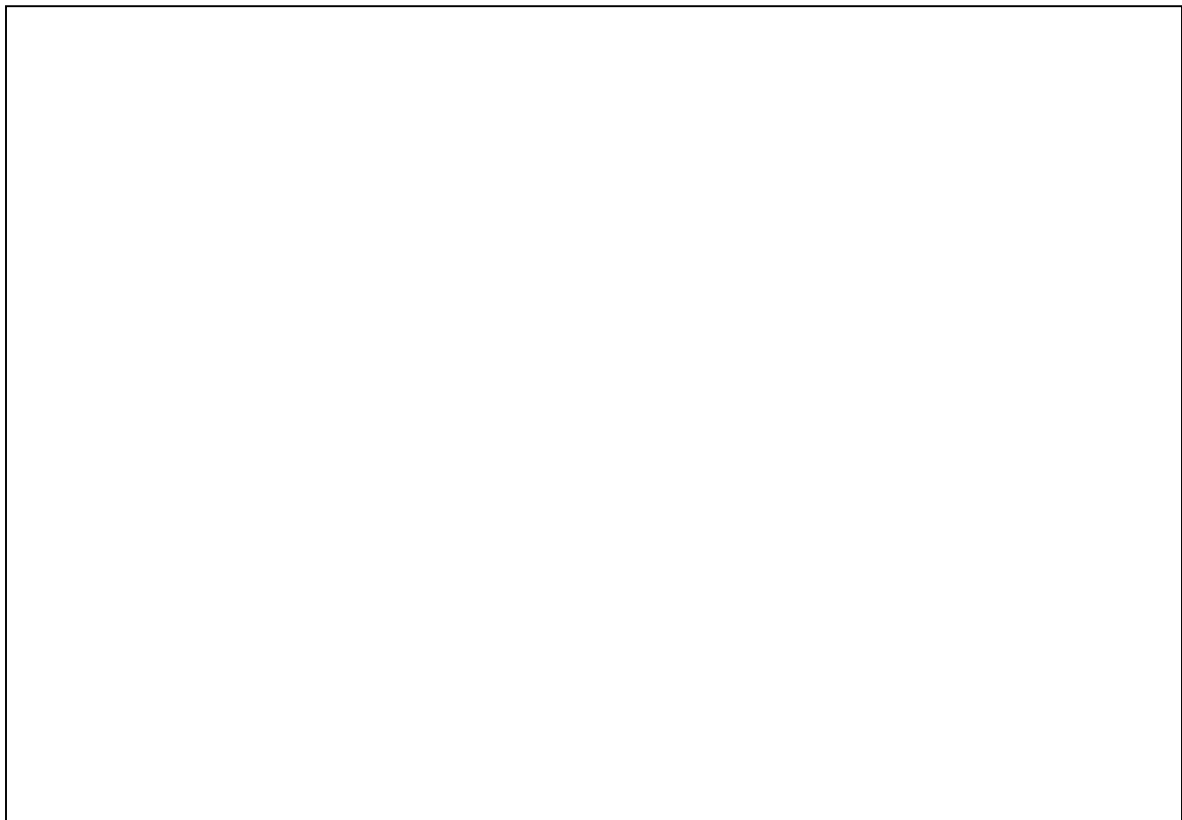
My Hero

Explain to your child what a hero is and give them some examples by telling them about your hero.

Do you have someone you look up to or want to be like?

Who is your hero?

Draw a picture of your hero in the box below.



Why is this person your hero?

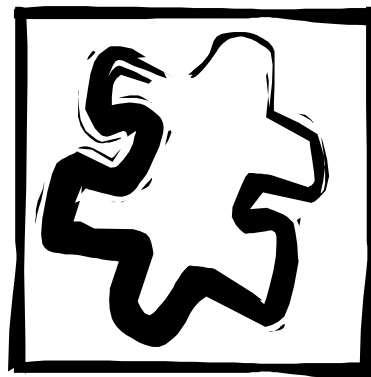
Have you told them they are your hero?

Word Search

F	O	F	H	F	O	R	G	I	V	E	N	E	S	S
E	X	A	O	U	A	S	Q	W	E	K	R	X	J	U
X	A	M	M	N	A	U	D	H	L	B	C	C	V	P
C	E	O	N	O	P	U	I	E	Z	B	L	M	H	P
I	O	V	I	Q	U	K	E	L	O	H	O	N	S	O
T	L	O	V	E	O	Y	F	P	R	O	U	D	D	R
E	X	C	O	A	R	I	P	F	I	M	A	U	R	T
D	A	J	P	G	S	B	T	U	Y	E	G	Y	R	I
O	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	L	N	I	W	G	E	V
R	A	B	K	R	S	E	O	L	I	R	T	O	S	E
I	M	A	L	T	E	T	D	M	H	I	R	S	P	F
A	I	A	T	H	R	P	L	E	A	S	U	R	E	F
D	L	E	Z	R	A	E	H	A	P	G	S	I	C	P
S	Y	B	S	U	P	P	R	B	P	O	T	A	T	E
L	P	Y	I	V	T	R	U	C	Y	B	L	I	E	S

Words to Find:

- LOVE
- FORGIVENESS
- TRUST
- FUN
- RESPECT
- PLEASURE
- HAPPY
- EAGER
- PROUD
- EXCITED
- SUPPORTIVE
- HELPFUL
- HOME
- FRIENDS
- FAMILY



**Welcome Home Letter to
Deployed Parent:**

Dear _____,

[illegible]

Love,

Draw a picture for your parent in the box below:

